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C O N F I D E N T I A L MINSK 000195

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TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: GOB SLOW TO INVESTIGATE ANTI-SEMITIC THREAT

REF: MINSK 018

Classified By: Charge Jonathan Moore for reason 1.4 (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Poloff met March 14 with Yakov Basin, a Jewish community leader, to discuss an anti-Semitic threat letter sent by the Vitebsk cell of the neo-Nazi Russian National Unity (RNE) group to the editor of a regional independent daily in January. Basin stated that the editor had filed the case with the regional prosecutor's office. The regional prosecutor together with police decided not to open a felony investigation in the matter. The case is now in the hands of the local BKGB, which, in Basin's opinion, has strong ties to the neo-Nazi group and is doubtful to investigate further. End summary.

Authorities Ignoring the Case

¶2. (U) The editor-in-chief of the regional independent daily "Courier from Vitebsk" Vladimir Bazan and independent media distributor Boris Khomayda received a threatening letter January 9 from the Neo-Nazi group Russian National Unity (RNE) (reftel). In the letter, RNE members threatened to disrupt newspaper distribution and to use their ties to government circles to punish Bazan and Khomayda if the newspaper did not publish an article condemning a planned Holocaust memorial in Vitebsk. (Note: Bazan had received a similar threat in August 2006. End note.)

¶3. (C) Poloff discussed the case with Yakov Basin, chairman of the Religious Association of Progressive Jewish Communities. According to Basin, Bazan and Khomayda filed a complaint with the Vitebsk Regional Prosecutor's office, which passed the case to the local police. Following a pro-forma investigation in which they determined the letter represented at most a misdemeanor, the police passed the case to the BKGB, where, according to Basin, the investigation has stalled.

¶4. (C) Authorities refused to investigate threats from RNE in 2006, explaining that the group is unregistered, and therefore it is impossible to track down the organizers of the group. Basin asserts that the BKGB supports the RNE financially and is using the organization to promote "its pro-Russia agenda" in Belarus. Therefore, the fact that the case has been passed to the BKGB is an indication of the GOB's tacit support for the RNE, according to Basin.

Comment

¶5. (C) Though post does not have proof that the BKGB controls or is in any way officially affiliated with Russian National Unity, it is clear that the GOB tolerates the neo-Nazi group and has no intention of investigating its anti-Semitic activities. The GOB's double standard for investigating unregistered groups is also clear; authorities assert that it is impossible to crack down on RNE because it is unregistered, yet use state mechanisms to oppress unregistered pro-democracy groups such as Malady Front.
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